

School Committee Meeting Minutes
Shirley Middle School
September 15, 2004

Present: Gary Bourassa, Chairperson
Hugh Muffoletto, Vice Chairperson
Paul Wilson
Bob Prescott
Don Parker

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent
Patricia Stern, Business Manager

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m.

Public Participation:

Several concerned residents were present to express their concerns regarding transportation. Chris Olson read from a letter she had written, asking the School Committee to deny the policy the administration has proposed regarding increasing the walking distance and consolidating bus stops. Mrs. Olson stated that she is concerned about the lack of sidewalks, the number of dangerous residents and the railroad tracks in town. Mr. Bourassa stated that it is not practical for every child to be picked up at his or her home. He stressed that the committee is trying to put out a good program with the resources they are given.

Mr. Muffoletto addressed the issue with the school bus not being able to pick up on Spaulding Road. He stated that he feels that more children will be put at risk by having the bus travel down that road than by having the children walk to a bus stop. Mr. Wilson also addressed the issue by stating that, as someone who has driven busses before, you can not turn a bus around from the direction it would be coming from. The bus would be required to turn around on private property. Mr. Prescott stated that he believes that busses can turn around on private property and does not see a problem, given that the property owner, Barbara Davis, is willing to sign a waiver and do whatever else is necessary to have the bus come down the road. Mr. Muffoletto suggested having a meeting with the highway and police departments, the bus company, school department and committee members as well as concerned parents so they may work to resolve the issue.

Laura Baker addressed her concern with issues such as bullying that may arise between students who walk to school. To whom do the children report any problems to? Dr. Scott suggested that the principal's be informed of any situations. Mr. Muffoletto suggested that, at the middle school, the mediation program might be of interest as well.

Mrs. Belanger addressed the committee with her concerns about cleanliness and maintenance issues of the LAW school. She stated that she presented the LAW administration a list of concerns. She was informed on two separate occasions that her concerns had been addressed when in fact they had not been met to her standards. She informed the committee that she contacted Mr. Grossman at the Board of Health about her concerns; Mr. Grossman's findings were presented to the committee. All issues of concern will be addressed, beginning with the possible asbestos. Mrs. Stern stated that due the 16 hours per day shortage in the custodial department it is difficult to maintain the buildings. Both Mrs. Stern and the committee stressed that they will continue to press for the cleanliness of all school facilities. It was suggested that a

volunteer group might be willing to come in and do some of the cleaning. Also suggested was having the principal's take responsibility for inspecting the bathrooms on a regular basis.

The committee took a short break at 8:25. The meeting reconvened at 8:39.

Recommended Action:

Next on the agenda was the SPED Director description. Dr. Scott noted that the position has been changed from Director of Instruction. He stated that he has interviewed 6 candidates, all of whom have now taken positions elsewhere. Mr. Bourassa gave Dr. Scott permission to advertise for the position. Mr. Parker motioned to approve the new job description with the omission of the Supervisor/Director's license requirement. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Business Affairs:

Mrs. Stern presented the committee with the Interim FY05 budget. Mr. Muffoletto stated that he was uncomfortable making decisions concerning a document he just received that evening. Mrs. Stern and Dr. Scott informed the committee that the school budget is constantly changing and, in order to present the committee with a clear, precise and complete budget, they needed work until the last minute to achieve this goal. Mrs. Stern continued to present the committee with an overview of the interim budget. She stated that she factored in all the typical ups and downs of working with such a budget as well as major SPED related issues that were not previously accounted for when the budget process began. Mrs. Stern recommended that, given these most recent figures, the committee approach the deficit committee for \$228,098. Mr. Muffoletto expressed his concern over the rising deficit amount. Mrs. Stern agreed with Mr. Parker that there needs to be some flexibility in working with a school budget as these budgets vary widely from traditional business budgets. The committee agreed to meet one hour prior to the next deficit committee in order to prepare for the meeting.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the committee moved ahead to review select items on the agenda. Dr. Scott presented the home school requests for Sarah Grace, Cassidy Manna and Don, John, Paul, Maria and Dominic Sears. Mr. Wilson motioned to approve all of the requests. Mr. Bourassa seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Mr. Prescott informed the committee that the accountant's office now requests the signatures of three committee members on the transfer warrants.

The members agreed to change the School Committee meetings to the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Gutheil